



Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy Committee Held in the Community Office at 8pm on Thursday 29th May 2014

Present:

Councillors:

David Tindale
Ian Hill
Tim Horton
Elizabeth Winton
Robin Wilson
Keith Lovelace
Nick Greaves
Robert Barber

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Members of the Public: 2

22/14 Apologies for absence

Rhian Woods, Nick Hancock, Tony Williamson, Roddy Orr, Bob West, Neil Boddington

23/14 Election of Chairman

Ian Hill proposed David Tindale and this was seconded by Robert Barber. There were no other nominations.

Resolved: That David Tindale be unanimously elected as Chairman.

24/14 Election of Vice-Chairman

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

25/14 Minutes of the Strategy Meeting held on 26th March 2014 were received by Council on the 8th April 2014 to be signed as a correct record

Resolved: That these minutes be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and that they be signed by the Chairman

26/14 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest notified.

27/14 Matters Arising

There were none other than agenda items.

28/14 Discussion Items

Main Discussion Items

1. Strategy Committee Structure - *To develop a collective opinion for the council on strategic issues that require more detailed consideration than can be addressed in Full Council and which are not directly within the terms of reference for any other committee. The issues to be considered could be referred to it by Full Council or by other committees, or they could be requests for formal consultation responses from other bodies. As the scope of topics that could be covered by this committee is broad, all councillors are voting members of the committee. It is not expected that all councillors will attend all meetings, but that those with special interest or knowledge of the main topics to be discussed would attend. The agreed opinion of this committee would be presented at the next Full Council for discussion and confirmation if accepted.*

To allow this committee to concentrate on issues that require wider discussion some tasks will be referred directly to an Action Board to report to Full Council. Action Boards will also be used to prepare briefing reports issued in advance of meetings to ensure members are well informed on major issues to be discussed by the Strategy Committee. The committee will meet bi-monthly. The agenda for each meeting to be prepared by the clerk and agreed by the chairman of the committee.

The structure above was discussed in the light of the development of Action Boards for this committee. This should speed up the process of discussion of an item and will also make the discussions of the Committee more informed.

It was agreed that the action boards should consist of 3 Councillors and their task will be to present a paper to a meeting of Strategy or Full Council. The Action Boards can incur no expenditure and will have to make recommendations, they cannot make any decisions.

Resolved: That we trial the idea of Action Boards in the following way:

1. When an issue is received at the Parish Council ,the Clerk (consulting the Chairman if necessary) to send the issue to the relevant Action Board. The Action Boards will be:

- a) Central policies and Procedures
- b) Traffic
- c) Environmental Issues
- d) OCC and SODC Consultations.

It was noted that Buses are dealt with by our Transport representatives Ian Hill and Tim Horton.

The Clerk will email Councillors to find out which groups they would like to be on and then the groups will be organised by IH, DT and the Clerk.

2. Watlington Parish Council – Draft Policy for use of Facebook and other Social

Media – this was attached to the Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Policy for use of Facebook and other Social Media is agreed.

3. Charlotte Coxe Charity 33 High Street – Memorandum of Understanding

There was much discussion on this issue. TH stated that it has been an interesting procedure and this was very much at the top end of what could have been achieved. He said that two things which will need to be addressed are; which two people will be on the Advisory Group and what will the money be able to be spent on. In time the Trust will need to have a policy on this and it will be important that the Parish Council should be able to influence the use of the money in the future. This issue will need to be discussed soon and a wider view from the community group will also be important. RB congratulated IH, TH and NG who have worked very hard on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1, at the end of the minutes) be agreed and that we write back to OCC and get this signed.

4. **Flooding issues around Watlington** – Nothing further to report.

5. **CLP proposal for Howe Hill** – SODC have asked for our comments on this – attached. It was noted that SODC have sent a response to Peter Richardson (today) and therefore it was agreed that we note a response has been from SODC (which will be emailed to all Councillors) and that there is no urgency for us to send them our comments.

29/14 Short Discussion items

1. **SevenOaks Town Council asking that Council support a proposal that they have submitted to Government under Sustainable Communities Act** (Letter No 179)

Resolved: To note this but to send no response.

2. **Cuxham with Easington Parish Meeting** (Letter No 170) – concern about traffic issues

This is a copy sent to John Howell

Resolved: That this information is noted.

3. **Notes from Keith Lovelace on the 2nd John Howell Meeting** - WatNext

Email to Mr Nimmo-Smith on better and more advance signage on the M40. It was said that it is hoped that we will discuss this at an appropriate time. IH reported that the third meeting with John Howell will take place on the 13/6/2014 and will be attended by OCC Officers and Thames Valley Police.

Resolved: That this information is noted

4. **CPRE – Proposed Housing Figures for South Oxfordshire** (Letter No 149)

IH reported that at the moment SODC have not made public any actual figures on the impact of The SHMA requirement for further increases in the housing requirement for Watlington. How much Oxford sheds to the larger villages would have a great impact.. After discussion it was agreed that we have no way of knowing if the figures that CPRE have quoted are reasonable or not.

Resolved: That we write to SODC stating what we have received from CPRE and asking them to clarify what this would mean for our Parish. IH/KT to send this letter.

5. **Watlington Sewerage Outfall and the Environment Agency** – Nothing further to report on this at this time and it was agreed to keep this on as an agenda item.

6. **Watlington Footpath 4** – TH to draft a letter on this to Beechwood Estates.

30/14 Update on on-going issues that are not agenda items for this meeting

1. **Watlington and the LTP for Oxfordshire**

a) **First Stage public consultation on LTP4-** This will run from 24 June -22nd July – Noted

b) **Response to our letter to OCC on this issue has been received from OCC** (No 161) DT stated that in our letter we asked that Watlington appear in the LTP. In their response they state that they have ring-fenced some money to support Neighbourhood Plans in helping to answer questions raised but do not answer the question we raised. Watlington was in the 2010 LTP and then just disappeared in the next one without any consultation. There is a bigger question of how would major traffic schemes, as Oxfordshire extends affect Watlington and we need to have the view of OCC.

Resolved: That as our questions were not answered in the OCC response, to write a further letter to OCC, with reference especially to paragraph 2. TH to draft this and IH to agree it before it is sent.

2. **Buses** –TH reported that as from 9th June 2014 the T1 will have an additional bus in the morning which is a great success for the continued campaigning from ourselves and parishes along the route. Other changes to buses have been made but Watlington has not lost any services. GoRide are having

discussions with OCC on a number of services. The Wallingford service that Whites have retained (Friday only) has been having problems. GoRide service the other days. The link bus to Junction 6 has not recently been as popular and previously. TH said that he has invited Thames Travel to the Church Fete to promote their services which they are not able to attend. However it is hoped that they will come to Watlington and publicise their services at some other time.

RB said that he is very pleased that there is now a service to Gatwick and Heathrow from Junction 6.

IH said that the weekend service to Oxford is very successful and the bus is quite often full.

3. **Broadband in outlying areas-** RB and RWn have met and reviewed the most recent information on this including the detailed plans for this area. They will continue to look into this with regard to the extra £2M being put into broadband in rural areas of Oxfordshire and will give an update to the next meeting.

4. **350th Anniversary of the Town Hall** – This will take place on Friday 11th July in the Town Hall. A list of invitees needs to be drawn up and in the first instance the Clerk will email the last list (December 2012) to all Councillors and ask for them to suggest anyone who should be invited to this.

31/14 Correspondence

1. **Peter Richardson** – Howe Hill signs funding - **The Operations Committee to deal with this issue.**

2. **Mike Young** – Suggestion that the WPC re-locate to 33 High Street (No 209) – **A response to be sent to him that as the building has now been sold it is a moot point.**

3. **SODC** – Go Active 60+ - Asking for people to join their steering group (No 201) – **EL agreed to be part of this Steering Group.**

4. **SODC** – Infrastructure – **This issue was discussed in the Finance and Operations Committee meetings.**

5. **Jeremy Irons** – Traffic Issues (Letter No178) – It was noted that most points are not Parish responsibilities but those of the County or District Council. It was agreed that we sent the letter to our County Councillors Steve Harrod and to write to SODC on the pavement cleaning of Junction 6. It was suggested that the area from Watlington to Pyrton be put on the SODC deep cleansing list.

Regarding raising the Zebra Crossing, KT to write to Mark Francis asking his view on this.

RB said that there used to be regular meeting on J6 issues and it would be good to revive these. It was thought that this would be a good time to look at J6 again with our County Councillor and other parishes.

J6 issue to be discussed in the July meeting.

A letter to be sent to Mr Irons. IH/KT to do this.

6. **Copas Farms** – Watlington traffic and pollution concerns (No 164)

Resolved: That we acknowledge this letter and that the contents have been noted.

7. **Tom Bindoff** – Has asked the following two questions on Air Quality, which were referred from Full Council to this committee. The questions have been modified slightly:

1. (a) When will WPC meet to formulate a response to the consultation? Will they consult more widely in order to get the views of local residents? **WPC will invite comments from the public when the Consultation comes out and will publicise the consultation in the Watlington Times, Parish Magazines, the website and the WPC Facebook page**

(b) What criteria will WPC use to assess the capacity of the SODC proposals to reduce air pollution to levels below the EU limit? **This is a difficult question and one that WPC will address**

once the report has been received.

2. (a) What action is WPC taking to find out what levels of small particulates (PM 2.5) there are in the AQMAs? These are recognised as the air particulate air pollutants which are most dangerous to health. **Agreed to ask SODC this question.**

(b) What steps is WPC taking to establish the actual health effects on local residents, especially on babies and children, of the current levels of air pollution? **Health affects do get measured and it was agreed that we ask the Surgery about this. IH reported that there is National Study starting on this and we will make reference this in our letter to the Surgery.**

32/14 Items for Future Meetings
Review of Solicitor
Icknield Community College Link

33/14 Any Other Business to note – Items to be notified to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.15PM

Appendix 1

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Charlotte Coxe Charity

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between Oxfordshire County Council (“the County Council”) acting as sole trustee of the Charlotte Coxe Charity and Watlington Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) in relation to setting out the basis as to how the Charlotte Coxe Charity (“the Trust”) is to operate once the sale of 33 High Street is completed.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to express the intentions of the parties and to provide practical guidance on how the operation of the Trust will be managed to meet the requirement that the assets of the Charity be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of Watlington without comprising the ability of the trustee to manage its day to day operation.

Background

The Charlotte Coxe Charity was established in 1949 By Laura Charlotte Coxe who donated 33 and 35 High Street to Oxfordshire County Council to hold on trust for the benefit of the people of Watlington. It is a registered charity no 297089.

35 High Street has been subject to extensive refurbishment and extension as a public library financed by the County Council, the proceeds of sale of the upstairs flat, garages and parking spaces and the fund raising of the Friends of Watlington Library... 35 High Street is a fully operational and extended library providing a range of facilities with strong community focus and participation of the people of Watlington and the wider local area. This falls to the County Council’s Library Service to manage and not the Trust.

The flat at 35 High Street has been sold on a long lease with a full repairing covenant so that simply leaves routine surveillance of the condition of the exterior which Property Services of the County Council will continue to undertake.

33 High Street is in need of similar refurbishment and despite best efforts it has not been possible to find any community based tenants to take up occupation following Age Concern securing alternative premises.

It has been agreed that 33 High Street should be sold and the proceeds be used for the Trust’s purposes in accordance with the Trust’s charitable objects namely for the benefit of the people of Watlington. This will require the permission of the Charity Commission which the Trust will seek to obtain. The Parish Council supports this application.

This will generate a capital sum, which effectively develops a capital asset within the Trust which comes under the responsibility of the Trust to administer.

It is also recognised that there is a need to ensure that there is closer involvement and connection with the local people of Watlington in relation to the Trust discharging its charitable responsibilities. This memorandum will therefore set out how the Trust will consult the people of Watlington before taking decisions in relation to the Trust.

The Terms of the Memorandum

1. The County Council is the sole Trustee.
2. The administration of the Trust fund remains with the County Council.
3. Management of the library service and operation of the library premises at 35 High Street remains the responsibility of the County Council’s Library Service.
4. Trust decisions will be taken by the County Solicitor in consultation with the Director for Environment and Economy and the Chief Finance Officer and with the Advisory Board.
5. The County Solicitor can refer any matter to the Cabinet of the County Council for decision and must do so if it is a key decision (ie over £500,000 or affecting 2 divisions of the County).
6. A Trust senior officer will attend a meeting of the Parish Council to present the Trust’s Annual Report to the Charity Commission.

7. The Parish Council agrees to have the Annual Report to the Charity Commission as an annual standing item for its meeting open to all the public.
8. The Trust will meet a minimum of twice per year. Once to approve the Annual Report and the other to receive recommendations with regards to charity spend. At either meeting, additional matters of business can be discussed.
9. Minutes of these meetings will be sent to the Parish Council.
10. An Advisory Board will provide the link between the inhabitants of Watlington and the Trust, and will meet a minimum of twice per year in advance of the Trust meetings. Once to receive the draft Annual Report and the other to agree recommendations to be made to the Trust with regards to charity spend. At either meeting, additional matters of business can be discussed.
11. The Advisory Board will consist of two Parish Councillors nominated and elected by the Parish Council with the local elected County Councillor to represent the views of the inhabitants of Watlington in relation to the Trust fund and to raise matters considered pertinent to the Trust's responsibility for management of the 33 and 35 High Street buildings. In addition the Board will have a named officer of the County Council to liaise and advise. Their role is to provide advice, assistance and representations on behalf of the people of Watlington in relation to the administration of the Trust fund.
12. The Advisory Board will represent the views of local inhabitants with regards to the work of the Trust and will engage with Parish Council Members and other members of the community to ascertain such views.
13. The Advisory Board will make recommendations to the Trustees with regards to the application of the Trust fund and on investment decisions and these views will be taken into account by the County Solicitor.
14. The presumption will be that the recommendations from the Advisory Board will be followed. In exceptional circumstances, if a recommendation was not followed, then a full written explanation will be provided of the reasons for the decision. The Advisory Board would have the right to raise a formal complaint against the decision which would be considered under the Council's corporate complaint procedure and would be subject of further complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. In addition a formal complaint can be made to the Charity Commission if it is believed that the Trust is in breach of its charitable objects or proper procedure.

Overall Aim

What is envisaged by this agreement is a much closer working relationship between the Trust and the community of Watlington to make sure that decisions are properly informed by the community and in accordance with the Trust Scheme.

General Principles

The parties are agreed and understand that nothing contained in this arrangement or the documentation arising shall prejudice or affect the Council's rights, powers, duties or obligations as Local Authority and all powers, duties and obligations of the Council under all public, private statutes, by-laws, orders and regulations shall be and remain fully and effectively exercisable. This Memorandum of Understanding is not intended to be legally binding, nor to create evidence or imply any contract, obligation to enter into a contract or obligation to negotiate.

The parties will work co-operatively and collaboratively together to ensure that the objects of the Charlotte Coxe Charity are met for the benefit of the people of Watlington.

Term

This Memorandum of Understanding shall come into effect from the date of signing by both parties and will remain in effect unless terminated by written notice by either party. Either party may request a review of the Memorandum of Understanding should they consider it necessary. Either party may withdraw from the Memorandum of Understanding without incurring any liability to the other party.